

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 7, 2022

1:02 p.m.

[1:02:01 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Senator Hoffman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair  
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair  
Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senator Natasha von Imhof  
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donny Olson  
Senator David Wilson

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

John Handeland, Mayor of Nome, Lake Tahoe; Denice Gilroy, Arctic Access and Independent Living Network, Nome; Eileen Arnold, Self, Bethel; Rhonda Schneider, Nome Community Center, Nome; Joy Baker, Self, Nome; Tessa Baldwin, Self, Kotzebue; Jacla Milford, Bethel Winter House, Bethel; Robert Baty, Chief of Police, Sitka Police Department, Sitka; Michael Jefferies, Self, Utqiagvik; Bessie Weston, Board Member, Mekoryuk; Sarah Sledge, Executive Director, Coalition for Education Equity, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

SB 162      APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

SB 162 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 163      APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

SB 163 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 164      APPROP: CAP; REAPPROP; SUPP

SB 164 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: NOME, BETHEL, KOTZEBUE, UTQIAGVIK, UNALASKA, DILLINGHAM, AND OFFNETS

#sb162

#sb163

#sb164

SENATE BILL NO. 162

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making reappropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

SENATE BILL NO. 163

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; making capital appropriations and supplemental appropriations; and providing for an effective date."

SENATE BILL NO. 164

"An Act making appropriations, including capital appropriations, reappropriations, and other appropriations; making supplemental appropriations; and providing for an effective date."

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^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: NOME, BETHEL, KOTZEBUE, UTQIAGVIK, UNALASKA, DILLINGHAM, AND OFFNETS

[1:03:21 PM](#)

JOHN HANDELAND, MAYOR OF NOME, LAKE TAHOE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Arctic Deep Draft Port Project in Nome. He stated that the project had been in development for a long time, and was now ready for construction thanks to a recent appropriation.

[1:05:26 PM](#)

DENICE GILROY, ARCTIC ACCESS AND INDEPENDENT LIVING NETWORK, NOME (via teleconference), spoke in support of senior and disability community service grants. She shared that the grant would help those who require additional needs. She remarked that the funding would help ensure the care for seniors. She spoke in support of a housing trust.

[1:08:14 PM](#)

EILEEN ARNOLD, SELF, BETHEL (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for spoke in support of funding for Tundra Women's Coalition Crisis Center for Victims and Survivors of Interpersonal Violence. She remarked that there was a major staffing issue for advocates as the trauma victims' experiences in exams after an assault.

[1:10:30 PM](#)

RHONDA SCHNEIDER, NOME COMMUNITY CENTER, NOME (via teleconference), testified in support of housing and homeless prevention; and food security. She shared that Nome had launched a project to house homeless people.

[1:13:04 PM](#)

JOY BAKER, SELF, NOME (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the Port of Nome. She spoke in concern of marine traffic. She stated that the Port of Nome currently was not capable to resupply vehicles, and increased risk of oil spills. She remarked that search and rescue was a primary concern in Nome.

[1:15:04 PM](#)

TESSA BALDWIN, SELF, KOTZEBUE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for public safety warm storage units for fire equipment and Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) housing. She shared that her community was recently affected by a fire, but four people lost their lives

because of the lack of access to fire fighting equipment. She remarked that volunteer firefighters were attempting to put out a fire using a shove, snow, and snowblowers.

Senator Hoffman wondered whether there was necessary personal for voluntary fire fighters if there was provided equipment.

Ms. Baldwin replied in the affirmative.

[1:18:18 PM](#)

JAELEA MILFORD, BETHEL WINTER HOUSE, BETHEL (via teleconference), spoke in support of creating a housing trust. She stressed that there was not enough housing for the state.

[1:20:41 PM](#)

ROBERT BATY, CHIEF OF POLICE, SITKA POLICE DEPARTMENT, SITKA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for community jails.

[1:21:57 PM](#)

MICHAEL JEFFERIES, SELF, UTQIAGVIK (via teleconference), spoke in support for the Step Up Program at the McLaughlin Youth Center. He also testified in support of behavioral health treatment and recovery. He also spoke in support of public radio. He also testified in support of intellectual disability waiver waitlist reduction.

[1:24:00 PM](#)

BESSIE WESTON, SELF, MEKORYUK (via teleconference), spoke in support of and increase of funding for the Base Student Allocation (BSA). She also testified in support of school major maintenance construction projects. She spoke in support of Power Cost Equalization (PCE) funding.

[1:25:40 PM](#)

RECESSED

[1:42:36 PM](#)

RECONVENED

[1:42:44 PM](#)

Senator Hoffman stated that there were no new individuals signed up to testify.

[1:42:58 PM](#)

RECESSED

[2:05:12 PM](#)

RECONVENED

[2:05:46 PM](#)

SARAH SLEDGE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COALITION FOR EDUCATION EQUITY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of significant investment to the major maintenance CIP list. She stressed that there had been significant deterioration of Alaska's school buildings. She spoke in support of funding for school bond debt reimbursement and Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) funding.

[2:07:49 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:31:14 PM](#)

RECONVENED

SB 162 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 163 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 164 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

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ADJOURNMENT

[2:32:02 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.